

# ARTS IN EDUCATION

## Institute explores the arts for children on autism spectrum

VSA Montana, in partnership with the Montana Arts Council and with funding support from MEA-MFT, will present a day-long institute for teachers, paraprofessionals and pre-service teachers on Thursday, Oct. 18, during the annual MEA-MFT Educators' Conference in Billings.

The institute is from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Castle Rock School, with a one-hour break for lunch. Teachers will earn six OPI renewal units upon completion of the day's activities.

"The Arts for Children on the Autism Spectrum" opens with a panel discussion featuring Brett Gilleo, a licensed clinical counselor with Big Sky Therapeutic Services in Great Falls and a VSA Montana board member; Dr. Priscilla Lund, an arts education professor at MSU-Bozeman; and Alayne Dolson, executive director of VSA Montana. Together, they'll offer an overview of the characteristics of learners on the autism spectrum, and discuss why the arts are effective tools for engaging these learners.

Gilleo, who works extensively with children on the spectrum, and with families and teachers, will follow-up with more in-depth discussion of the characteristics and behaviors



**VSA teaching artist Don Kukla helps students use nonverbal communication skills.**

of children on the autism spectrum, and will introduce learning strategies that engage these learners.

Lund, who has done extensive research in using the arts as a way to engage people on the autism spectrum, will discuss current research and guide teachers in an arts activity that involves understanding directions and sensory integration issues.

Marlene Schumann, an arts educator with a master's degree focusing on assessment in the arts, will share arts activities and processes and discuss assessment of the learning.

Don Kukla, a VSA teaching artist, will engage participants in mime activities designed to help students use nonverbal communication skills, and learn to interpret and "read" nonverbal language. VSA has done long-term assessments of the growth in communication skills by students with significant disability, including children on the autism spectrum, which indicates the value of this kind of instruction.

The institute is limited to 25 participants. To register for the institute visit the MEA-MFT website, [www.mea-mft.net](http://www.mea-mft.net).

In addition to the all-day institute, Gilleo will present a two-hour workshop on ways to engage families in their children's education, and Dolson, a former music teacher, will present a workshop on Music Activities for Children with Disabilities on Friday, Oct. 19.

For additional information, visit [www.mea-mft.com](http://www.mea-mft.com) or call VSA Montana at 406-549-2984.

## Coming to a school near you: "Macbeth"

Montana Shakespeare in the Schools brings Shakespeare's "Macbeth" to approximately 15,000 students in communities throughout Montana and Wyoming as a part of its annual fall tour, which begins Oct. 15 and concludes in late December.

The 10-week tour is the first of two educational outreach programs being offered this academic year by Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, which is based at Montana State University. The second, "Montana Shakes!," a tour designed specifically for elementary school children, will tour in the spring of 2013.

Joel Jahnke, a professor at MSU since 1976, serves as artistic director for Montana Shakespeare in the Parks as well as for the two educational programs. According to Jahnke, the schools program is now in its 20th year of bringing a shortened version of an entire Shakespeare play to high and middle school students who otherwise would have few, if any, opportunities to experience a quality live performance produced by professional company.

"As with the summer tour, this program places special emphasis on underserved, rural areas," Jahnke said. "Many of the schools we visit have a population that is even smaller than the communities we serve during the summer months and the company travels an average of 800 miles per week to get there."

Chicago-based director Kevin Fox directs "Macbeth." "The hooks for me, for the kids,



**Christopher Prentis portrays a bloody-handed Macbeth in Shakespeare in the Parks' 2008 production.**

boil down to influence and betrayal," he says. "The heart of influence is in the witches and Lady Macbeth who are, respectively, representing selling and peer pressure, both of the very worst kind, through advice, temptation and manipulation."

He notes that King Duncan, who is eventually betrayed by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, embodies "deep friendship, trust and loyalty ... This sets up the worst betrayals possible ..."

There will also be workshops offered to each school on relevant themes of the play, Shakespearean verse and stage combat.

Montana Shakespeare in the Schools began in 1993 with two professional actors who performed scenes from Shakespeare's plays with minimal costumes and scenery. It has grown

to include an eight-member professional company that offers a full Shakespearean production, complete with ornate costumes and scenery as well as a talk-back session and a full complement of workshops.

Special public performances of the play are slated for Oct. 19 at Buffalo High School Auditorium in Buffalo, WY; Nov. 3 during the Elise Event at the Black Box Theater on the MSU Campus in Bozeman (see details below); Nov. 9 at the Shane Center for the Arts in Livingston; and Dec. 14 at Frenchtown High School Auditorium in Frenchtown.

For more information, visit [shakespeareintheparks.org](http://shakespeareintheparks.org) or call 406-994-3310.

### The Elise Event

Shakespeare in the School's annual Elise Event, a fundraiser named in honor of sponsor Elise Donohue, will be held at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 3 at MSU's Black Box Theater, located at 11th and Grant St.

The event features a full performance of "Macbeth," an after-show catered wine reception, and a "talk back" with the actors, artistic director, and designers.

Tickets are \$40 per person and advance reservations are highly recommended. For more information, call 406-994-3310.

## Art and photo contest celebrates historic bridge

Preservation Cascade, Inc. is sponsoring an Art and Photo Contest for 14-18 year olds on Nov. 10 at the Great Falls Public Library.

Students are invited to create artworks that focus on the Historic 10th Street Bridge that spans the Missouri River in Great Falls.

The organization is awarding prizes in each category of \$100 for first place, \$75 for second place and \$50 for third place.

The minimum size is 8-by-10 inches, and the maximum size is 18-by-24 inches. All entries must be original and have the historic bridge as their subject.

Finished work must be submitted to Lisa Easton at Great Falls High School before Nov. 5, and will be displayed at the Great Falls Public Library. Local artists and photographers will select the winning entries Nov. 10.

For more information, call Arlyne Reichert at 406-452-5492.



7

### T.E.A. grants available

The Montana Arts Council continues to offer Teacher Exploration of the Arts (TEA) grants. This program is for elementary classroom teachers or K-8 teachers with an elementary endorsement, who are asked to teach visual art or music and do not have a background in that subject, and wish to work one-on-one with a professional working artist in order to develop skills in a particular artistic discipline.

Disciplines include dance, literary arts, media arts, music, theatre and visual arts.

For more information, go to [art.mt.gov/schools/schools\\_tea.asp](http://art.mt.gov/schools/schools_tea.asp).

### Student art magazine, Signatures from Big Sky, now available

The 22nd issue of the Montana student literary magazine, *Signatures from Big Sky*, is now available. The publication continues to highlight work by student artists and writers throughout the state – from remote schools and rural districts to urban areas, and from students of diverse cultures and ethnic and racial backgrounds, to special needs and AP students.

The cover of this year's magazine features artwork by Tara Gardner, a freshman at Belgrade High School.

The deadline for submissions for the next issue is Feb. 15, 2013.

